

NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED ORGANIZATION TOOL KIT



A HOW-TO GUIDE

FOR FORMING ORGANIZATIONS AND IMPROVING
THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN YOUR COMMUNITY



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NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED ORGANIZATION TOOL KIT

The power of neighborhood-based organizations

Organizing a neighborhood is all about bringing people together to work for the betterment of everyone. The Neighborhood-based Organization Tool Kit provides a guide for creating organizations that strengthen neighborhoods by engaging people to act on their own behalf.

FORMING AN ORGANIZATION?

Community Services wants to help.
Call: (919) 996-6100
Or go to: www.raleighnc.gov/communityservices

The Tool Kit is one of many resources available to neighborhood groups from Raleigh's Community Services Department. The Department's Neighborhood Services Division provides advice and support to residents as they form organizations in their neighborhoods.

The principal work of creating an organization and carrying out its activities rests with residents themselves. Neighborhood-based organizations succeed when residents are eager and willing to make their own decisions about programs and projects.

In forming organizations, residents make their neighborhoods more self-sufficient and powerful. In turn, the quality of life improves for all Raleigh residents.

Benefits of a neighborhood-based organization

Why form a neighborhood-based organization? Because ...

- ✓ An organization provides a way for neighbors to get to know and support each other.
- ✓ When neighbors are organized, they have more power to make changes and reach goals.
- ✓ Members of an organization gain a unified voice and influence in community affairs.
- ✓ Having an organization allows better communication with local government and other agencies.
- ✓ Residents assume responsibility for keeping their neighborhood healthy and vital.

NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED ORGANIZATION TOOL KIT

What is a neighborhood-based organization?

A neighborhood-based organization is a group of residents who work together to improve and maintain the quality of life in their community. Organizations can form to work on a particular issue, plan events or renew a neighborhood. They can take the shape of neighborhood associations, garden clubs, neighborhood watch organizations, homeowners' associations and other types of groups.

Members of neighborhood-based organizations, whatever their form, work as a team. Every member of the team has value and connection to those around them. To be effective over the long run, neighborhood-based organizations develop their own leadership and capabilities.

Neighborhood-based organizations elect officers and hold regular meetings to achieve their goals. They draw on resources to make the community a better place to live, identify challenges in their neighborhoods, support changes and improvements, help resolve conflicts and organize volunteers for community projects.

Homeowners' and Neighborhood Associations

People sometimes become confused about the difference between a homeowners' association and a neighborhood association. Both are neighborhood-based organizations. However, a homeowners' association usually consists of those who own homes in a particular development or subdivision. A neighborhood association may include not only homeowners but also renters, business owners, school and church officials and members of service organizations.

Activities

Neighborhood-based organizations decide their own activities. Here are some examples:

- Youth talent shows
- Holiday fellowship events
- Programs to recognize high school graduates
- Neighborhood signs and street light upgrades
- Yard-of-the-month signs
- Neighborhood development plans
- Mini parks
- Spring festivals
- Neighborhood beautification and cleanups
- Neighborhood cookouts
- Voter education
- Newsletters to share information

In addition, neighborhood-based organizations often advocate for their neighborhoods within City government. They share the opinions of their neighborhoods before the City Council and other governing boards.

NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED ORGANIZATION TOOL KIT

Neighborhood-based organizations and Citizens Advisory Councils (CACs)

Neighborhood-based organizations can have a say in what is happening in the larger community by participating in the City's Citizens Advisory Councils, which are advisory bodies to the City Council. Raleigh has 18 Citizens Advisory Councils (CACs), each representing a different geographic area.

The CACs share information with residents and solicit their views on matters affecting their neighborhoods. The City Council relies on the CACs for advice on community issues, neighborhood quality, existing or new facilities and decisions on planning and zoning.

CAC leaders are volunteers who are elected by residents of the area they represent.

The City encourages neighborhood-based organizations to send representatives to meetings of the CAC in their area. While neighborhood-based organizations operate independently, attending CAC meetings is a good way for them to share information with others in the community.

Tips from neighborhood leaders

Here are some words of advice from experienced leaders of neighborhood organizations in Raleigh.

What are the main advantages of having a neighborhood organization?

Eugene Weeks, Foxfire Neighborhood Association: "You get to know your neighbors, communicate with your neighbors about problems and solutions in your neighborhood. The personal touch of 'greeting' is very important in a neighborhood."

Cindy Freeman, Berkshire Downs West Neighborhood Association: "Getting to know your neighbors and the neighborhood."

Jason Hibbets, Pleasant Ridge and Ramsgate Community Watch: "For me, it's having a group of people to lead the neighborhood and help create a sense of community. Lots of people have lots of different talents, but an association can help harness those talents and focus them on objectives to improve the neighborhood."

Tips from leaders of neighborhood organizations, continued

Heidi Miller, Oakwood Park Neighborhood Association: “Having an association of any sort helps keep the neighborhood informed about what is happening not only locally, but within the greater parts of the town. It also gives people a place to start if they don’t know where to begin with a challenge they face. We are a starting point for changes in the community, and as a group we have more of a voice. In the case of a community watch, it helps people learn how to support their neighbors and keep their community safe. It is also a way for people to voice concerns and have them addressed – most of the time.”

What tips do you have for people who are forming a neighborhood organization?

Eugene Weeks: “Tell a neighborhood why it is important to organize. Everyone wants a safe and secure neighborhood. Do a questionnaire to your neighbors about your area and forming an association. Use the answers from the questions to inform your community [about] the need to organize ‘now.’”

Cindy Freeman: “Be patient. If in a diverse neighborhood, be inclusive of everyone. It’s important that your association is representative of the people that live there.”

Jason Hibbets: “Think big and start small. One problem I have is that I’ve got a ton of ideas, but I can’t do it all. A tip that I have is to make sure you can train someone to take your place so that you don’t get burnt out. Work on stuff that’s passionate to you. Also, be aware that things tend to happen in cycles, and most people will react and get involved when something impacts them. [Also,] don’t hold meetings just to hold a meeting. Be transparent, honest, and collaborate in how the organization is run. Be informative and factual, instead of quick to make a decision because of one person’s opinion.”

Heidi Miller: “Don’t expect the City to do the work for you. Much of the footwork is left to you. You will need to figure things out for yourself, figure out whom to contact in the City for help. Stick with the people who are consistently helpful and you’ll be fine. Try to go around those who are not. And always be supportive and responsive with everyone, if they help you or not (to the best of your ability.) ... Overall, if you ask the right person, the City is very responsive to a neighborhood that puts forth the effort to take care of itself.”

What is the best way to encourage people to be active in their neighborhood organization?

Eugene Weeks: “You need to motivate them by letting them know this is their neighborhood. What affects one household could spread to another and then the whole community. Please get involved to help our community. We need your gifts and talents to make our community work. There are no bad ideas when you are trying to have a good neighborhood.”

Cindy Freeman: “Encourage participation by soliciting individual talents. If you have a plumber in the neighborhood, ask him about helping a resident with a leak, etc. Some people are artists and like to work with children, etc.”

Tips from leaders of neighborhood organizations, continued

Jason Hibbets: “With the Pleasant Ridge & Ramsgate Community Watch, we do two things really well that have helped us stay fairly strong over the last five years. We are consistent with our meetings and events. We provide a variety of ways for people to participate. ... We basically hold four meetings a year. Our August meeting coincides with National Night Out. Our winter meeting, we host a cookie exchange. We have an annual clean-up, an annual yard sale, and things like that. Some people will never come to a meeting, but they join your e-mail list and love helping with the street sweep. For each of our meetings, we try to bring in speakers for hot topics, so it's not the same old boring 911 calls. We like to keep it fresh and try to leverage any issues that may attract more people to the meeting.”

Heidi Miller: “A periodic newsletter actually keeps people informed and gives them a feeling of community -- even when they don't let you know. You find out how many people felt a part of the neighborhood when the newsletter stops, and they begin to mention they'd enjoyed getting it. It takes a lot of time and effort to keep the group going.”

How do you keep a neighborhood organization going as time passes?

Eugene Weeks: “Neighborhood associations need to get information out in their community by newsletters, telephone contacts and personally talking to people. Let them know this is their neighborhood and you want to show ‘empowerment’ by doing things to [improve] your neighborhood appearance, safety and security, so that anyone will be willing to live in your community. Keep your association going by having community functions, including activities for the youth and senior citizens.”

Cindy Freeman: “Persistence and a lot of hard work. Try to come up with fresh ideas for neighborhood functions. This is a very hard task, but I have met some wonderful people along the way.”

Jason Hibbets: “One, [keep people informed.] If they're too busy to participate, at least they can be on the e-mail list. Two, [encourage people] to work on things that they are passionate about or can help with. Three, make win-wins. Find ways to [let] the person who is committing time get something out of it and help the organization. Four, let people ‘work their way up,’ and start them off small. Maybe get them to be a block captain before asking them to become an officer. Don't expect too much at first. Five, we hand out flyers three or four times a year, because we don't have a lot of money. People always say that it's the first time they've heard about our group. So we need to do a better job of meeting people when they move in.”

Heidi Miller: “In slow times when there is not a lot of participation, we have a ‘Yahoo group’ with which the neighborhood stays in touch. Eventually we get meetings organized again, and one day we may even get more participation as more energetic or social neighbors move in. The newsletter keeps neighbors informed about what's going on in the City or if there is something of concern to the neighborhood.”

NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED ORGANIZATION TOOL KIT

How to form a neighborhood-based organization

Neighborhood-based organizations are built on the abilities and skills of members of the community.

While the Community Services Department encourages residents to take the lead in planning activities and making decisions, the Department's community specialists can provide guidance as you form your organization. Community specialists also can connect your organization with resources from local government and nonprofit agencies. Call the Department at (919) 996-6100 for assistance.

As you organize, be sure to take advantage of your neighbors' talents and skills. Don't try to do everything by yourself. Discover what others are good at doing, and let them do it.

Remember to celebrate your successes, small and large, as your organization grows and takes on projects. By recognizing even small victories, you help solidify everyone's commitment to the work of the organization.

Focus on the positive

Sometimes people form an organization to address a neighborhood's problems, such as crime or graffiti. But focusing only on problems leads to only short-term solutions. Organizations thrive over the long run by making the most of the good things about their neighborhoods, including:

- Skills, talents, gifts and passions of individuals.
- Local associations, or groups of people who share an interest or cause, such as social clubs, fraternal organizations and senior citizens groups.
- Resources of public, private and nonprofit institutions, such as schools, hospitals and libraries.
- Physical space or land that is important to the neighborhood, such as parks and greenways. Even a vacant lot can be an asset to a neighborhood if it is turned into a community garden.

Step-by-step guide

Here is a process you can follow as you put together your organization. The specific steps can vary, depending on the type and size of the group you are forming.

Step One: Develop a core group

Gather a small group of neighbors who are committed to forming the organization. If you are creating an organization such as a neighborhood association, the group can include residents, business owners, garden club officers, community watch representatives, students, church leaders and others.

Step Two: Meet with the core group

The core group may have to meet several times as the organization takes shape. The core group should:

- Choose a temporary chairperson.
- Strive for consensus on what you hope to achieve as an organization. The group should seek agreement on whether and how an organization can improve your neighborhood and its quality of life.
- Determine any special talents, skills, expertise and interests of core group members. You can draw on these individual assets as you form and keep your organization going.
- Discuss goals, possible projects and concerns.

Step Three: Form a leadership group or committees

Organize a leadership group or committees to establish:

- *Boundary lines.* Boundaries might be natural features, such as creeks, or manmade barriers, such as roads, landmarks and railroad tracks. Look at a City map and tour the neighborhood to help set the boundaries. Call the Community Services Department to see whether your boundaries include any existing neighborhood organizations.
- *Vision, mission.* This should be a brief statement on the goals and responsibilities of the organization.
- *Date for general meeting.* Set a date, place and agenda for a neighborhood-wide meeting.

Step Four: Conduct outreach

Spread the word about your group to as many people as possible. Outreach will help you gauge interest in the organization as well as discover the skills that others can bring to the group.

Step One:

Develop a core group

Step Two:

Meet with the core group

Step Three:

Form a leadership group or committees

Step Four:

Conduct outreach

Step Five:

Hold a general meeting

Step Six:

Plan the next meeting

Members of the core group can:

- Obtain a list of residents and property owners. The Community Services Department, (919) 966-6100, can help.
- Contact neighborhood residents, businesses, volunteer groups, schools and churches about your plans for a neighborhood organization. To help guide the organization's activities, ask people the following four questions, and keep a record of their responses. (You can do this through surveys, one-on-one conversations or community meetings.)
 - 1. What do you like about your neighborhood?**
 - 2. What improvements would you like to see?**
 - 3. What are your talents, skills and interests?**
 - 4. How are you willing to help?**
- Publicize the date, time and place of the general meeting. You can do this through door-to-door visits, flyers, mail and posters.
- Identify other potential leaders for the organization.
- Network with other neighborhood organizations in the city. They may offer tips and suggestions for your organization. Many neighborhood organizations appear on the **Neighborhood Registry**, available at www.raleighnc.gov/community_services.
- Let your local Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) know about your association and sign up for the CAC's mailing list. Attend meetings of the CAC.

Step Five: Hold the general meeting

The first general meeting of the organization should include everyone interested in participating. Here are some steps to make the session go smoothly:

- Make sure you have a well-planned agenda.
- Set up the room in advance with tables and chairs. Display handouts near the entrance.
- Have a sign-in sheet.
- Go over the vision/mission statement and boundaries of the organization.
- Identify goals for the neighborhood organization.
- Form committees to work on goals, publicity, bylaws, organization structure and other matters you choose.
- Provide information about upcoming neighborhood activities.

Step Six: Plan the next meeting

Decide the agenda for the next meeting. All meetings of the organization should include reports from committees and an opportunity to share success stories.

Sources: Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Northwestern University; City of Sacramento, Neighborhood Services Department, Sacramento, Calif.; County of Sacramento, Department of Neighborhood Services, Sacramento, Calif.; Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center; City of Tallahassee, Fla., Neighborhood Services; Manhattan Community Board 10, New York, N.Y.

Spread the Word

You will want to make sure everyone in your neighborhood knows about the organization and has an opportunity to participate. Here are some ways to communicate with your neighbors:

- Publish a neighborhood organization newsletter. This can be a print newsletter, e-mail newsletter or both.
- Announce your meetings and events in area newspapers and in school, church and club newsletters.
- Develop a website or blog.
- Distribute flyers door to door.
- Put your announcements in your Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) newsletter, and announce the organization's meetings at CAC meetings.
- Ask permission to place notices, posters or flyers in Laundromats, libraries, supermarkets, restaurants, local businesses and waiting rooms of dentists' and doctors' offices.
- Offer to speak to business groups, service clubs, schools and churches.
- Send letters to everyone in the neighborhood.
- Set up a telephone tree, or pyramid system of notifying members through a telephone campaign. For example, one person starts the tree, and each person notified has a list of other people to call.

Finances

Every neighborhood-based organization that collects or distributes money should have a treasurer. Organizations also may want to open a personal or corporate checking or savings account.

Opening a bank account requires a Taxpayer Identification Number from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. Check with your bank about other requirements for opening an account.

A neighborhood-based organization also may file for 501(c) (3) status as a charitable organization. The IRS website, www.irs.gov, has information about how to obtain this status.

NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED ORGANIZATION TOOL KIT

Community Services Department programs

The Community Services Department offers services and programs to aid neighborhood-based organizations and develop leaders. Call the Department at (919) 996-6100 or go to www.raleighnc.gov/communityservices for more information about any program listed here.

Community Specialists

The City's community specialists connect people to services and programs they need to keep their neighborhoods strong. The specialists are trained in helping neighborhoods to discover their strengths and assets and in mobilizing people to take action on their own behalf. They can assist you in forming a neighborhood-based organization and keeping it going.

Neighborhood Improvement Matching Grants

Neighborhood-based organizations are eligible for City grants for projects that strengthen and improve neighborhoods and enhance a sense of community. To receive a grant, an organization must provide matching resources, which can include a combination of fund-raising, donations and volunteer labor.

Neighborhood Registry

The Registry is the City's official list of neighborhood-based organizations. Being listed on the Registry helps improve communication with the City and links your organization with City services. In addition, registered organizations are eligible to apply for Neighborhood Improvement Matching Grants.

Neighborhood Exchange

Each September, residents gather for a Neighborhood Exchange, with guest speakers and interactive programs that allow community members to share information. A committee of volunteers plans the program for the Exchange. In the past, the Exchange has covered such topics as crime prevention, community gardens, senior involvement, teen activities, community organization and Hispanic-Latino outreach.

Citizens Leadership Academy

The academy is an educational series that helps participants discover leadership skills and knowledge. Many attendees have gone on to become leaders in their neighborhood and community organizations. Evening classes are held in the spring and fall.

Raleigh Neighborhood College

Learn about the services provided by Raleigh and Wake County through this series of classes. Students meet and interact with City and County staff and other residents. They also gain the tools to assist in improving and organizing their communities. Classes typically take place on Thursdays evenings in the spring and fall.

Citizen Area Liaisons

A Citizen Area Liaison serves as the link between residents of neighborhoods and organizations, agencies and resources, including the City. The Citizen Liaison program empowers residents to identify and solve problems in their neighborhoods. Liaisons get to know their neighbors, conduct neighborhood assessments, arrange meetings and share information and ideas.

NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED ORGANIZATION TOOL KIT

Other resources

City of Raleigh information
<http://www.raleighnc.gov>
(919) 996-3000

Raleigh Department of Community Services
www.raleighnc.gov/communityservices
(919) 996-6100

Raleigh Police Department
www.raleighnc.gov/police
(919) 996-3335

Wake County Public School System
www.wcpss.net
(919) 850-1600

North Carolina Community Watch Association
www.nccwa.org

NeighborWorks America
www.nw.org

Neighborhoods, USA
www.nusa.org

Asset-Based Community Development Institute
Northwestern University
www.abcdinstitute.org

NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED ORGANIZATION TOOL KIT

Public services

Animals running loose
(919) 831-6311

Animals missing
(919) 772-3203

Abandoned vehicles on streets
(919) 831-6311

Building permits
(919) 516-2150

Bus information
(919) 485-7433

City government information
(919) 996-3000

Crime prevention/community relations
(919) 996-3335

CrimeStoppers/crime tips
(919) 834-4357

Fences, permits
(919) 516-2555

Garbage, recycling, yard waste
(919) 831-6890

Graffiti
(919) 996-6001

**Health, sanitation and public nuisance
code enforcement**
(919) 807-5110

Hazardous waste disposal
(919) 996-6890

Noise complaints
(919) 831-6311 or (919) 996-3335

Police information
(919) 996-3335

Potholes/street repair
(919) 996-6446

Public nuisances (overgrown
grass/weeds/trash/debris/abandoned
vehicles on private property)
(919) 807-5110

Seasonal leaf collection
(919) 996-6446

Sidewalk repair
(919) 996-6825

Speed limit enforcement
(919) 996-3335

Storm drainage concerns
(919) 996-3940

Street lights
(919) 516-2163

**Street signs, damaged or
missing street signs**
(919) 996-6608

Traffic signal malfunctions
(919) 996-3020

Water, sewer emergencies
Weekdays: (919) 250-2737;
Weekends, holidays: (919) 829-1930

NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED ORGANIZATION TOOL KIT

APPENDIX

Bylaws

Bylaws are the rules for governing the organization. They determine the process for electing offices, holding meetings, delegating duties and filling vacancies. A neighborhood organization writes and distributes its own bylaws. An organization may ask an attorney to review the bylaws before adopting them. Here are sample bylaws that you can consider in establishing your neighborhood organization.

MIDTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

BYLAWS

Article 1

Name The name shall be Midtown Neighborhood Association, hereafter referred to as the Association, which is located within the quadrant surrounded by Elm Street, Pine Street, Oak Drive and Maple Avenue.

Article II

Section 1 Purpose: To preserve a safe, clean, friendly neighborhood.

Section 2 Mission: To keep the Midtown neighborhood clean, safe and attractive and to undertake activities that improve the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Article III

Membership

Section 1 Eligibility: Any person age 18 and older who resides or owns property in the Midtown area shall be eligible for membership and for office.

Section 2 Voting: Each member or family shall have the right to cast one vote.

Section 3 Voting method: A simple majority of attending members rules on any regular agenda item.

Section 4 Association meetings: The Association shall meet on the second Tuesday of each month. No meeting shall be held in July or December. The Executive Committee may call special meetings. A seven-day notice shall be given for special meetings. Minutes shall be taken at each association meeting.

Section 5 Membership donations: The Association shall request from members an annual contribution of \$15 to pay for such things as the newsletter, hot line, post office box, and Association sponsored activities. The contribution will be requested for each calendar year. The membership chairperson shall maintain an up-to-date membership list.

Article IV

Executive Committee

Section 1 Composition: Elected members of the Executive Committee of the Association shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee Chairpersons nominated by the President and approved by the membership. Standing committees will be the

Newsletter, Membership, Safety/Security, Beautification, Traffic and Social. Other committees may be added as deemed necessary by the Association. Officers and committee members shall serve without compensation.

Section 2 Elections: The Officers shall be nominated in October and elected at the November meeting by the members present. The successful candidates will take office at the January meeting.

Section 3 Term: Executive Committee members shall serve a one-year term from January 1 to December 31 of the year immediately following election.

Section 4 Term limits: The President and Vice President shall not hold the same office for more than two consecutive one-year terms.

Section 5 Vacancies: A vacancy of an elected officer shall be filled by a substitute presented by the Executive Committee to the Association for the period remaining until the next annual election. The Association shall vote on the substitute as soon as feasible.

Section 6 Meetings: The Executive Committee shall meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month prior to a general Association meeting. The President may call special meetings anytime or upon telephone requests from three members. In either case, a three-day notice shall be given.

Article V

Duties of Executive Committee

Section 1 President: The President or his/her designate shall plan and preside at all regular and special meetings and supervise the direction of Association events and committees. He/She shall keep important records while in office. He/She shall consult with and keep the Executive Committee informed and obtain its approval for all important pending activities and expenditures. With the Treasurer, he/she shall summarize yearly expenses and present a budget for approval by the Executive Committee and the membership early in the year. He/She or his/her designate shall review bills and bank statements before passing them on to the Treasurer.

Section 2 Vice-President: The Vice-President shall carry out the duties of the President in the event that the President is temporarily unable to fulfill his/her duties. The Vice-President shall also work closely with the President to ensure committees and events function properly.

Section 3 Secretary: The Secretary shall prepare and maintain minutes of meetings.

Section 4 Treasurer: The Treasurer shall collect, distribute and oversee all funds the Association deems necessary for its functioning. The Treasurer shall present precise fiscal reports to the Executive Committee and its members at meetings and shall deposit the collection of yearly contributions. The Treasurer, under the direction of the Executive Committee, shall ensure that funds are used for the exclusive support of the Association's mission. Checks shall be signed by the Treasurer and by one of the following: President, or if unavailable, by the Vice President or by one of the past Presidents.

Section 5 Committee Chairpersons: Chairpersons shall coordinate events and functions pertaining to the nature of their committees in conjunction with the overall purpose of the Association. The Chairpersons will collect ideas and suggestions from the membership and gather volunteers to help organize events. The Chairpersons will prepare a projection of anticipated expenditures when appropriate, and obtain approval from the Executive Board prior to the sponsored event.

Article VI

Dissolution: Upon dissolution of the Association, any assets remaining after payment of debt and liabilities shall be given to a nonprofit community group, as directed by a majority of the Executive Committee.

Parliamentary procedures and officers

Parliamentary procedures are rules for conducting meetings. They are used to maintain order, ensure equal treatment for everyone, and accomplish business efficiently. Small groups may choose to operate informally and not use them. Large groups will find them very helpful.

To follow parliamentary procedures, the group will need at least a few elected officers. They are:

Chairperson or President - The Chairperson or President is the presiding officer at the meeting. Meetings are controlled by the Chairperson/President. It is the responsibility of the Chairperson/President to use parliamentary procedures, treat everyone fairly, keep the meeting moving and ensure that all items on the agenda are addressed. The Chairperson/President must recognize anyone who wishes to speak at a meeting.

Vice Chairperson or Vice President - The Vice Chairperson or Vice President serves as an alternate to the Chairperson/President in presiding at meetings. The Vice Chairperson/Vice President also serves on designated committees.

Treasurer - The Treasurer handles finances, keeps financial records and prepares budget and financial reports. The Treasurer also maintains the tax-exempt number and coordinates tax statement preparation for 501(c) (3) organizations.

Secretary - The Secretary is responsible for keeping clear and accurate records of meetings, including the minutes. The Secretary also maintains the roster of members, stores a copy of the neighborhood plan and bylaws and handles correspondence.

Holding a meeting

All meetings should have an agenda to list the activities at the meeting. Here is a typical agenda:

1. *Call to order*

The Chairperson calls the meeting to order and makes brief opening remarks.

2. *Approval of minutes*

Members approve the minutes of the last meeting.

3. *Neighborhood success stories*

Invite members to share their successes since the last meeting. Recognizing even small successes encourages people to remain involved in the organization.

4. *Reports of officers*

The Treasurer and other officers deliver the organization's business reports. No motion is needed for adoption of the reports. After each report, the chair asks, "Are there any questions or observations?" If not, the reports are filed.

5. *Reports of committees*

Committee chairs give their reports. After each report, the Chairperson asks, "Are there any questions or discussion in regard to this committee report?" If not, then each report is filed.

6. *Committee recommendations for action*

Motions may be made and seconded by any member present. Each motion is discussed and disposed of before another motion is proposed. One way to keep a meeting moving forward is to limit time spent in debate.

7. *Recognition of guests*

Guests are invited to make their presentations to the organization.

8. *Unfinished and new business*

Unfinished business from the last meeting is brought to the floor for action. The Chairperson asks, "Is there any unfinished business?" After discussion and action, the Chairperson asks, "Is there any new business to discuss?"

9. *Announcements*

People making announcements should sit up front. The Chairperson asks "Are there any announcements?"

10. *Adjournment*

When the meeting's business is complete, the Chairperson recognizes a member who makes a motion for adjournment. Another member seconds the motion. A majority vote is required to adjourn.

Sample Agenda

MIDTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Agenda
June 26, 2009
7:00 p.m.

1. Call to order
2. Approval of minutes
3. Neighborhood success stories
Members share examples of success since the last meeting
4. Officer reports on recent achievements
Treasurer
5. Reports of committees and committee recommendations for action
Membership
Housing/environment
Block Captains
CAC report
6. Guests
City Council Member Teague
Roger Doe, City Transportation Department
7. Unfinished Business
Neighborhood festival
Matching grants program
Tree planting program
Crime report
8. New Business
Election of officers
9. Open floor to members for announcements
10. Adjournment

Next meeting is at 7:00 p.m. on September 12th at Washington Heights Park,
1020 Washington Heights Blvd.

Sample Minutes

MIDTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

June 26, 2009

Summary of Meeting

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

Motion to approve minutes made by Doug Evans and seconded by Elizabeth Jones. Motion passed unanimously.

Success stories

Elizabeth Sutton announced that the City has granted a permit to place a new sign at the entrance to Midtown.

Roger Maples reported that a group of neighbors built a ramp for Louisa Smith, who is 86 and uses a wheelchair.

Janet and Jimmy Carr spent the weekend clearing trash from the vacant lot owned by an estate at the corner of Ash and Maple streets. The lot looks great!

Reports of officers

Treasurer: The Association added \$165.34 to group's general fund from the sale of T-shirts at the last community festival.

Reports of committees

Membership: Alexander Smith said that 23 new residents were contacted and asked to join the Association. So far 10 have joined, and this committee will contact the others. The area has a new shopping center, and he will contact the developer about joining the Association.

Housing/Environment: Ms. Jones said the committee has contacted the City about the erosion on Golden Drive at South Creek. She also reported to the City Inspections Department about the building materials that have been left for many days on the side of Forest Drive.

Block Captains: Mr. Evans noted that several block captains from the Mills Street area attended the Community Watch seminar last month, and they are distributing information to their blocks. The Association has been asked to keep an eye out for the park and school this summer and to report any odd happenings to the police via 9-1-1.

CAC report: Mr. Johnson discussed the rezoning cases that were presented at the last CAC meeting and said the CAC will meet again at 7 p.m. Sept. 12 to vote on them. The Association will have someone there to represent us, but everyone involved should plan to attend.

Committee recommendations for action

No votes taken on committee reports.

Recognition of guests

Council member Ryan Teague said the City Council is considering a bond issue for storm water facilities. The bond issue would finance water containment systems to prevent downstream pollution. He also received a list of concerns from citizens.

Roger Doe from the City Transportation Department discussed traffic-calming devices because residents on Evergreen Street complained about heavy traffic during rush hour. He said that there is an effort to install stop signs at the George Street intersection. He presented a slide show on devices used in other places. The Association agreed to discuss this item again.

Unfinished business

Festival: Everyone is invited to the neighborhood festival at Herald Square on Saturday, Aug. 10, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. There will be free hot dogs and the fixings plus ice cream.

Trees: The City has donated 50 trees for planting along our streets. Please talk to John West at 555-4654 to volunteer to help with this committee.

Matching grant: The Association has completed an application for a \$1,500 grant from the City to clear the lot at Ash and Maple streets and plant a community garden. The Association is matching the grant with \$1,500 in donations and volunteer labor.

Crime: Mr. Weaver said there have been reports of car break-ins at Glenview Shopping Center. He said the police advise you to hide your cell phones and any accessories in your car. He noted that daytime burglaries are a continuing problem in certain areas, and he reminded everyone to keep their windows and doors locked. He said a resident reported that a man in a dark blue construction truck was asking people if he could use their phone for directions. One resident did the right thing and said that she would get the cordless phone and bring it out to the man. The person then left, saying that he could not remember the number. Be on the alert!

New Business

Elections: Nominations for the 2009-10 officers were as follows:

President – Gene Williams and George Thompson

Vice President – Maria Elliot and Floyd Sutter

Treasurer – Brenda Adams, Debbie Davis and Anne Bradshaw

Secretary – Terry Flowers, Jean Evans and Janice Young

Elections followed the nominations, and the new officers are:

President – Gene Williams

Vice President – Maria Elliot

Treasurer – Debbie Davis

Secretary – Jean Evans

Announcements

Gene Williams, the Association's new president, announced that Mayor Caroline Alston will take a walking tour of the neighborhood on Monday. If you would like to join the mayor on the walk, meet at 9 a.m. at Washington Heights Park.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by George Thompson and seconded by Debbie Davis. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.